Libraries as Imperatives for Achieving Standard Education for National Development

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *This paper gave an overview of libraries and its types, and looked at the roles which the library would play to give unwavering progress for national development and cohesion. The paper also highlighted the possible obstacles that could hinder the smooth sailing of libraries in achieving national development through better standard of education.*

Design/Methodology & Approach: *The methodology adopted was contextual analysis that involved the review of materials ranging from publications, text books, the internet etc.*

Implication: *in the course of trying to build other developmental infrastructures, the libraries are sometimes neglected, underequipped and destroyed. A growing nation must identify with the libraries and the intellectual treasures therein.*

Originality/Value: *The paper concludes that libraries have directly or indirectly led to the promotion of information acquisition and dissemination; foster education, culture and allow people to acquire knowledge. As a result, libraries should be actively involved in nation's development planning.*

Keywords: *Libraries, Standard, Education, National Development, Nigeria.*

Paper type: *Conceptual research.*

INTRODUCTION

A nation that strives for a better standard of education is always focused on the right channel and a holistic approach to take, in order to arrive at the best. It is justifiable to apply all it takes for both the human and capital resources growth in the verge to a proper standard of education. The libraries, however, are key to a nation's dignity of a sound standard of education which is translated into a better and developed society.

However, it is unfortunate that some of the world libraries are neglected, underequipped and sometimes destroyed in trying to build other infrastructures. A good example in this part of the world is the Imo State Public Library Board which was destroyed in place of building a motor park. Some were deliberately or accidentally destroyed as a form of cultural cleansing, for instance the Report that Isis destroyed thousands of books and manuscripts in Mosul libraries in Iraq which was perpetrated in regions controlled by armed extremists, (the guardian. com/ books/ 2015/feb/26/isis-destroys-thousands-books-library). This similar act was seen as a form of genocide when it happened to the libraries listed below many years back (Lemkim, n.d). Hence this term

was considered by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 to mean ethnocide which although was replaced with genocide and human actions. Some of these libraries are the Library of Alexandria, Library of Nalanda in India and the accidental burning of the Duchess Anna Amalia Library in Weimer (https://en.m.list-of-destroyed-libraries...). This, thus shows an indication of where libraries are placed in our societies

A growing nation must identify with the libraries and the intellectual treasures therein. Libraries are forceful tools for national development and also germane in educational development not leaving out any level of educational pursuit and building. No nation grows without a well-documented, selected, organized and planned information meant for the society's consumption. The earlier the libraries are involved in development planning the faster the nation would be liberated from underdevelopment in our standard of education and the nation's development in general.

Development is a many-sided track just to get the best out of lots. According to Kemjika and Nwankwo (2002) development are qualitative changes

which involved the functioning or performance of parts which are within the targeted area. Development also to them is defined as a series of progressive and orderly, coherent changes leading towards better activities, projects, maturation, etc. It means that development involves both qualitative and quantitative changes within or outside our environment. Development according to Sulemana (2010) is defined as the capacity of a state to increase its human resource with the aim of achieving higher outcome of production for the satisfaction of the basic needs of majority of its citizens and empowering them to make demands on the government.

The development of a nation is not achieved when the standard of education is shaking, nonproductive in both human and capital resources, and lack a disconnect to its information base (library). By this, the standard of education of a nation s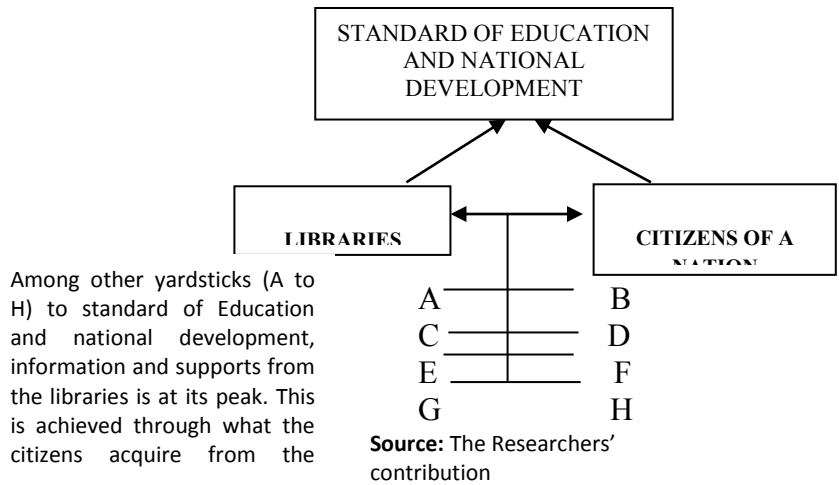hould have the knowledge and skills students should possess at critical points in their educational career. To enable them acquire these skills and knowledge required to be transferred to the society, the libraries stand tall to it as they impart literacy ranging from digital, media, visual, data, game, health and financial literacy, civic and ethical literacy, news literacy, coding and computational, and foundational literacy which is the building block upon which other skills can develop. These are the top ten (10) literacies in education today (Pietila, 2017). According to David-Borha (Standard Bank, n.d.) "if people are educated they are then better able to contribute to the growth of their countries and ultimately, Africa". In the library(ies) are intellectual materials and the individuals (librarians) who have been trained to carry out these activities of training and retraining of the citizens of a nation both in formal and informal settings. In support to David-Borha's assertion, Sukula (2016) has this stated, that

> *… the Libraries are the knowledge hubs and learning centers since the ancient times … The making of states or countries in very early phases of world history are filled with the stories of libraries…*
> *What the current human kind visualizes is the legacy of libraries as supporter in learning, leisurely reading and few more functions that are carrying the social or community building…*
> *The developments are not "in-one-go" kind of steps during couple of decades where the libraries have reappeared before its people in a highly dramatic frame outlook. The context of development can be found in the contemporary education scenario, worldwide revolution of information and communication technologies and of course, the willingness of the librarianship itself.*

What willingness? The willingness to move our education to a greater height. A nation with sound citizens educationally, no doubt is a great nation with great minds in achieving developmental strides in all ramifications.

A PILLAR DIAGRAM SHOWING A SUCCESSFUL STANDARD OF EDUCATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Among other yardsticks (A to H) to standard of Education and national development, information and supports from the libraries is at its peak. This is achieved through what the citizens acquire from the

Source: The Researchers' contribution

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LIBRARIES, TYPES AND ROLES THEY PLAY FOR STANDARD OF EDUCATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Libraries are homes for all and a place where intellectual materials are kept. Libraries according to Aloysius, Ekanem-Esang and Chinyere (2017), is an intellectual hub of the society, the home of knowledge and citadel of learning, where important aspects of an idea, method, or practice towards the acquisition of knowledge is built. To Akidi and Onyenachi (2017), libraries are places where anyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and people to achieve their full potential in promoting sustainable development and improving quality of life. They further stated that individuals and businesses have always looked up to libraries for information, especially in the developed parts of the world. The standard of education growth is directly proportional to the use of the library (ies). Moreover, when the libraries are well-equipped, the individuals who get trained through the treasures kept in the libraries end up depositing their potentials in their various communities, be it local, state or the country at large.

A nation needs the library to build its standard of education and its nation. In this vein Udoh (2017) described the library as a long term generator for wealth, a house for trail blazers and information power bank to any person, groups of persons and organizations who want to build a strong nation. This implies that for growth or development of any kind, information is the topmost tool to achieving a height and break boundaries.

However, five (5) types of libraries would be considered and the roles which they play. These library types are: National, Public, Academic, Special, and School libraries. These libraries play important roles in the achievement of standard of education and national development. The national library as an apex library of any country, which is maintained by the government of the country where it is located serve every member of the society. According to Arua (2015), it belongs to the entire nation and exists to serve everybody within the nation. It is a sort of reference library of last resort because information not got from the other libraries are got from the apex library. This is so because they preserve, conserve and make accessible the nation's documented heritage; thus students (graduates and post-graduates) and researchers get information materials for their educational pursuit. Answers to issues bothering on economic development are got from the libraries. It provides information resources for existing businesses, and for potential business startups. These resources

however, are seen as a source of value-added information that is got in time and accurately. This is so in the public libraries according to Glass in Udoh (2017) and can be achieved same way in the National Libraries. In order to ensure better standard of education, according to Olanlokun and Salisu (n.d), the National Library of Nigeria launched the Readership Promotion Campaign in 1980 and still follows it up, it's done as a yearly affair. The aim of this project include to:

- ! be relevant to our culture
- Investigate problems which hinder the development of reading habits among the people.

It is the primary depository of Nigerian Publications and so the legal deposit law stipulates number of copies of publications to be sent to the library. For instance, the government departments' deposits 25 copies of each publications made while commercial publishers deposits 3 copies of every publications made. Ten (10) copies are deposited by the state government and its departments. All these deposits gave the national library an edge above other types of libraries and also a strong hub of information collections for making the standard of education of a nation great and laudable.

The services rendered by the national libraries do not stop at collection of literature within the country of location. It rather collects also all foreign literature and publications important and germane to the nation. To further improve standard of education in a country to achieving national development, the national libraries according to Edom (2012) assembles, maintains and extends a collection of books, periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers, maps, musical scores, films and recordings and such other matters as the board considers appropriate for a library of the highest standing and it takes responsibility for the development of the National Bibliographical Services (NBS). The involvement of the national libraries in the planning of the nation's economy will in no small measure boost the Standard of Education and enhance the country's development at the long run.

The public libraries also are very important in the day to day activities of a striving nation. They are agencies of government. The public libraries are libraries created to serve our communities. Each state has responsibility for establishing and maintaining public libraries. They are tax-supported libraries, managed and supported by state and local

government, local communities and sometimes non-governmental organizations.

Since it serves all categories of people that live in the community where it is located, according to Arua (2015), the public library is more or less a universal library because it is not restricted to any group of users, and provides service without any form of discrimination in bid to get the people educated. According to Madu and Adeniran (2005) the public library has the universal objective of serving the general public towards the educational upliftment and awareness of rural and urban persons, to enhance and develop their potentials. They also provide education sources which will enrich and further formal education (Aboyade and Aboyade, 2017).

The academic library is another type of library that aims at raising the standard of education of a country. They include university, college, polytechnics and other libraries in the tertiary institutions. It serves those who do research. Nnadozie (2007) defined academic libraries as libraries established in institutions of higher learning such as universities, monotechnics, colleges of education, colleges of technology and other such institutions that offer education at the tertiary level. He further stated that these libraries support teaching, research and community/extension services, which are acknowledged as the tripartite functions of their parent institutions.

This library type is the bulwark of research and scholarship throughout the world, Nnadozie (2007) opined. And so, its mission and role is to develop citizens of a nation to attain a height in education and return it to the society at large. Their roles to the nation's citizens are to:

- Provide quick access to information resources to students, staff and researchers to enhance their learning, teaching, recreation, research and development (Omeluzor & Omeluzor, 2017).
- Provide expensive standard works especially in the professional disciplines
- Provide materials for self-development (Madu & Adeniran, 2005).
- Encourage the advancement of learning and facilities for the pursuit of learning.
- Undertake any other activities appropriate for a University of the highest standards (Olanlokun & Salisu, n.d).

The special library as the name implies is a library that is special because it takes care of specialized kind of activities. To Ashworth as cited in Okiy (2014) special libraries are established to obtain and exploit specialized information for the advantage of the organization which provides their financial support. The special libraries owe its existence to their organizations and thus are primarily designed to serve limited number of experts, scientists and research workers.

However, in order for people and the population found within the corporate organization to get equipped educationally, in information and face their activities squarely, the special libraries play such roles as:

- Provision of internet services

- Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), in this case users may want full text or abridged version faster and further want information that clearly answers their enquiries. In response to this, libraries have provided and have been providing Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) services. Information that may be of interest to the users are forwarded to them before the users request for it (Aboyade and Aboyade, 2017).
- Bibliographic services

- Indexing

- Abstracting and

- Photocopies

Presently, the various important sectors /units of the economy such as banks, hospitals, public corporations like Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Power Holding Company of Nigeria (P.H.C.N), etc. and supreme court library have their special libraries that researchers, students mainly post-graduate students visit and carry out their researches for educational purposes and for proffering solutions to challenges that may arise in their places of work. These are to make the society a better place through their findings. Therefore, special libraries acquire, organize and disseminate specialized information in no small measure; rather, its many research results have contributed in the improvement of human living in better educational endeavours and in national development.

The school libraries are pertinent in the growth and advancement of students. The researchers opined that the school library is a spring board to which students are lifted to acquiring higher levels of education. According to Tiwari (2013), a school library is a library within a school where students, staff, and

often, parents of a public (state) or private (fee paying) school have access to a variety of resources, in order to ensure that all members of the school community have equitable access to books and reading, to information, and to information technology.

The school library serves as learner-oriented laboratories which support, extend and individualize the school's curriculum. In further explanations, Aboyade and Aboyade (2017) stated that the school libraries supplement both teaching and learning materials that students and teachers need for their academic work; in trying to do this they equip them (teachers and students) with the required skills to use the collection and excel in their educational pursuit.

OBSTACLES THAT COULD HINDER THE SMOOTH SAILING OF LIBRARIES IN ACHIEVING BETTER STANDARD OF EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is obvious that these library types discussed have not expedited action seriously on the standard of education in Nigeria as to push up the nation's development. This is so because of some salient reasons such as:

- **Inadequate power supply**: - The epileptic public power supply in our libraries according to Edom (2012) has put our libraries into a fix in terms of carrying out their functions or roles swiftly.
- **Government policies** – There have been series of policies put up by the government and yet hardly do the government address strictly policies towards libraries and information centers. Government policies are tools for national development in Nigeria. According to Oyeniyi and Olaifa (2011) the role of libraries and information centers becomes very crucial since they are the "information house" and should be "the power house" through which various government policies will be communicated to the public in order to enhance effective implementation ranging from education to other sectors.
- **Inadequate infrastructures**: The challenges facing the libraries are also the inadequacy in infrastructures. Nigerian libraries accordingly to Ejedafiru (2010) are having trouble meeting the needs of users, citizens of the country and other researchers because of a poor economy and lack of ICT infrastructure

for a speedy information acquisition and dissemination in order to improve our standard of education.

- **Poor storage and preservation of electronic information resources** is a problem in our libraries (Edom, 2012) as the equipment meant for the preservation are rarely purchased due to high cost.
- **Inadequate funding in all libraries in the country**. Lack of fund incapacitates our libraries to acquire relevant information technologies, educational materials etc to enhance the standard of education and better services (Arua, 2015).
- **Training of the library personnel to acquire modern skills** are not done on regular basis. The use of modern facilities always is better in order to foster learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW LIBRARIES CAN MAKE PROGRESS ON ACHIEVING BETTER STANDARD OF EDUCATION TO IMPROVE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the achievements of targeted goals, there should be improvements on the major challenges itemized in order to make progress. Such contributions are:

- **Adequate funding** – libraries in Nigeria need funds to properly run the activities of the libraries. The libraries need materials both prints and non-prints that will boost our educational standards.
- **Personnel training** should be encouraged because it is a vital tool as it would improve the skills required for the use of modern amenities that foster learning. According to Anyaoku (2017), staff should be supported to attend workshops to keep them updated in the current happenings in the practice or profession.
- **Modern facilities should be deployed**. The deployment of relevant and functional facilities will go a long way to improving the rate at which information acquisition and dissemination are done in the libraries. When the citizens of a nation are served very well, definitely the result would be better in their educational career. These facilities however, needs modern preservation gadgets for longevity and better operation.
- **The government policies** should also and always capture the libraries. Drawing up and summing the policies on education without the library embedded in it is an error because

education and libraries work side by side and are interwoven. One cannot work well without the other, therefore, the government, educationists and elites of the society should make it open to the policy makers that the education of the nation has a lot to gain working together with the libraries.

- **The epileptic power supply** in the libraries according to Edom (2012) has been a problem facing the libraries. The government, the NGOs and the rich in the society can put a stop to this by donating and installing power plants, solar energy and inverters. The libraries need steady power to work, to enable them achieve their goal of preserving and conserving the materials entrusted into their care, and disseminate relevant information. The libraries on their own part should stand tall in imparting to the society, the students (secondary and tertiary) and other levels of education (primary and nursery) the literacy required to move on in this era of new information ideas and technologies. What this implies is that library has no meaning if it cannot impart education.

CONCLUSION

Libraries play important roles in our education and for national development. In White's (2012) assertion, libraries play a fundamental role in the society because the treasures that they house and preserve have created opportunities for learning, support literacy and education, and help shape the new ideas and perspectives that are central to a creative and innovative society. When the required education geared towards the use of the right information materials which are domiciled in the libraries are used, the society to a great extent will record developmental moves in the different sectors of the society, education sector in particular.

Despite the flaws that have somehow slowed down the roles of the libraries on accelerating the standard of education, libraries have made crucial impact on the nation through the institutions, sectors and communities in which they are established. This has directly or indirectly led to the promotion of information acquisition and dissemination; foster education, culture and allow people to acquire knowledge.

However, provision of adequate funding, good infrastructures, regular supply of electricity, among others in our libraries, would help in the improvement of our standard of education for national development.

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